

*Training*  
**NEW CORINTH**  
A STUDY OF 1 CORINTHIANS



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to the Series .....	3
How to use this Companion Guide.....	5
About 1 Corinthians.....	7
Series Plan .....	9
Week 1 - Overview .....	11
Week 2 - Correcting Divisions .....	13
Week 3 - Confronting Scandals .....	15
Week 4 - Clarifying Sex.....	19
Week 5 - Celebrating Marriage AND Singleness .....	23
<i>Week 6 - Resting in Christ</i> .....	25
Week 7 - Consciously Care .....	29
Week 8 - Challenging Commitment.....	33
Week 9 - Caring through the Gifts.....	37
Week 10 - Centering on the Resurrection.....	41
Week 11 - Closing Well.....	43
Keep it Going .....	45



“...TO THOSE SANCTIFIED IN CHRIST JESUS, CALLED TO BE SAINTS TOGETHER WITH ALL THOSE WHO, IN EVERY PLACE, CALL UPON THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.”  
**1 CORINTHIANS 1:2**





# INTRODUCTION TO *THRIVING IN NEW CORINTH*

*For the past few years, when I read 1 Corinthians, I can't help but see a lot of similarities between ancient Corinth and modern-day America. Many of the problems the Greek city faced, our nation seems to also contend with. And the struggles of the church in Corinth seem to mirror the struggles I see the American church facing. History does indeed seem to be repeating itself.*

*The similarities between these two vastly different people, places, and times could stem from...*

- **Strategic location**

*The ancient city of Corinth was located on a four-mile wide isthmus. This allowed ships to come from the east or west to drop off supplies and passengers, while travelers moving north/south on the isthmus would pass through the city. Such traffic brought an assortment of people, who carried with them their religions, cultural practices, and more.*

*Likewise, America's reputation as geographically safe, religiously free, and rich in opportunities brought immigrants galore over our first two hundred years. As in Corinth, these travelers brought their ideas, dreams, practices, and more to their new home.*

- **Cultural Significance**

*It is of no surprise to hear of the global cultural power America has across the globe. Our entertainment, economic power, entrepreneurial spirit, and even some missionary efforts have brought American ideals to multiple places across the globe.*

*While not as politically powerful as Rome, nor philosophically influential as Athens, Corinth was an economic and religious powerhouse. As one biblical scholar put it, "Corinth was at once the New York, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas of the ancient world." (Gordon D. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 3.)*



- **Sexual Reputation**

*Corinth was so famous for its religious temples with cult prostitutes that to have intercourse with someone who was not your spouse was to “act like a Corinthian.” (Aristophanes (ca. 450-385 BC)) Suffice it to say, sex was a major part of the Corinthian culture.*

*Likewise, for the past several decades, sex has become an increasingly larger part of American culture. While many European countries have been globally influential, America’s promotion of non-marital intercourse, same-sex relationships, and sexual identities through Hollywood’s productions (found on big screens in theaters and small screens in pockets) have made a nation formerly seen as “conservative” in its sexual morals to having a reputation as sexually loose.*

- **Church Dysfunction**

*As we’ll discover over the next ten weeks, the church in Corinth was far from spiritually healthy. They struggled with division, worldliness, scandals, spiritual/theological immaturity, and more.*

*Sadly, the American church is in a similar spot. The broader church is experiencing divisive tribalism, leadership scandals, and theological weakening. A nation once known for its Christian missionary heart has shifted to a nation to whom missionaries now come.*

## **FOLLOWING JESUS IN MODERN-DAY “CORINTH”**

*All of the above reasons make a study of the book of 1 Corinthians as timely as ever, which is why I have named this series **Thriving in New Corinth**. My hope is that the next eleven weeks will...*

- *help you understand the gospel theologically,*
- *help you apply the gospel to your daily life,*
- *help you live a faithful Jesus-centered life in modern-day Iowa,*
- *and help protect and build us as a Riverwood Church family.*

*So thanks for joining me in this study of 1 Corinthians!*

*Pastor Erin Bird*

# HOW TO USE THIS COMPANION GUIDE

This guide is designed to supplement and deepen our Sunday sermon series entitled *Thriving in New Corinth*. Each week, you will study one of the big topics found within the book of 1 Corinthians in preparation for the upcoming sermon on that topic. Each study in this guide includes:

## **1. A Brief Introduction to the topic**

The intro will aim to provide context to help you get the most out of the study.

## **2. A Scripture Reading Plan for the week**

Each week contains four days of various Scripture passages to help you consider the topic for the week (some weeks have a “Bonus” reading). The average reading is between 10-20 verses long. We recommend reading the passage at least twice.

You will notice that some passages aren’t from 1 Corinthians. This is because some readings will supply background and/or context to a future reading, and/or contribute to the topic itself (to give you a broader understanding from Scripture). You will also notice some readings from 1 Corinthians are “out of order.” This is because Paul addresses a topic in multiple places in his letter.

You will need to supply your own Bible. If you do not own one, please take one from the Resource Table in the Lobby to keep as your personal Bible, or download a Bible to your phone.

## **3. Reflection Questions**

We will give you two or three reflection questions on the day’s reading to help you consider how to live the life to which the Holy Spirit calls you.

## **4. A Prayer Suggestion**

We will give you a prayer idea related to the Scripture reading for the day.



## A CONSIDERATION

As you work through this companion guide, you might consider doing it with someone else. For instance, you could meet once a week with one or two other people to talk through the topic and passages. You could also set-up a text group with two or three (or more) people about what you are learning. You could even consider making this a part of your Growth Group discussions.

## A CHALLENGE

There are several verses from 1 Corinthians found throughout this *Companion Guide* located at the bottom of various pages (like the one below). To take your learning further, consider memorizing one or two of these verses, or even all of them.

"I GIVE THANKS TO MY GOD ALWAYS FOR YOU BECAUSE OF THE GRACE OF GOD THAT WAS  
GIVEN YOU IN CHRIST JESUS."  
1 CORINTHIANS 1:4



# ABOUT 1 CORINTHIANS

## THE WHO

Written by the Apostle Paul to the church he planted in Corinth.

## THE WHERE

Corinth had a long history before Paul planted the church there in Acts 18. It was founded sometime before 1200 BC as a Greek settlement, but had been rebuilt after a devastating war in 146 BC. Because of its location near sea ports along trade routes, it became the capital of the province of Achaia (southern Greece) and a Roman colony.

Because of the influx of people, Corinth became home to numerous pagan religions, some of which built temples that employed prostitutes as part of the “worship” of their god/goddess. The most famous of these was the temple of Aphrodite which sat on top of a mountain just south of the city. Other major deities honored in Corinth (because of the ports) included Melicertes (patron of seafarers) and Poseidon (the sea god).

## THE WHEN

Written sometime between AD 53–55, toward the end of Paul’s three-year ministry in Ephesus.

## THE WHAT & WHY

First Corinthians is the second longest epistle (letter) written by Paul. (His longest is Romans.) His letter covers *many* different theological and practical topics, but there was one primary issue he was addressing: **unity**. The Corinthian church was fractured because of pride, selfishness, and a lack of love, all of which stemmed from a skewed view of the gospel.

But don’t make the mistake that the dysfunction of the Corinthian church meant they “weren’t very good.” Like many churches today, the Corinthian church was very accomplished; some people were intellectually sharp, some



financially blessed, some with amazing stories of life change, and some visibly gifted by the Holy Spirit. Yet, their giftedness and successes had puffed them up, causing them to not “live like Jesus lived and love like Jesus loved.”

Which is why at the heart of this book is the reality of the cross and resurrection. We will see Paul admonish this church to return to the logic and pattern of the gospel, so that their pride might be replaced with a Christlike servant-hearted love and unity.

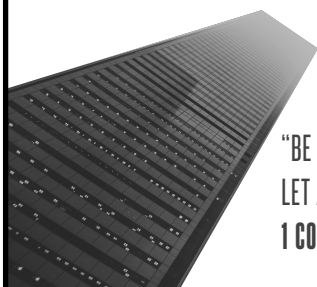


“FOR THE WORD OF THE CROSS IS FOLLY TO THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING,  
BUT TO US WHO ARE BEING SAVED IT IS THE POWER OF GOD.”

**1 CORINTHIANS 1:18**

# SERIES PLAN

WEEK	STUDY DATES	SERMON DATE	TOPIC
1	Sep 1–6	Sep 7	Overview
2	Sep 8–13	Sep 14	Correcting Divisions
3	Sep 15–20	Sep 21	Confronting Scandals
4	Sep 22–27	Sep 28	Clarifying Sex
5	Sep 29–Oct 4	Oct 5	Celebrating Marriage AND Singleness
6	<i>Oct 6–11</i>	<i>Oct 12</i>	<i>Rest In Christ (Restoration Sunday)</i>
7	Oct 13–18	Oct 19	Consciously Care
8	Oct 20–25	Oct 26	Challenging Commitment
9	Oct 27–Nov 1	Nov 2	Caring through the Gifts
10	Nov 3–8	Nov 9	Centering on the Resurrection
11	Nov 10–15	Nov 16	Closing Well



“BE WATCHFUL, STAND FIRM IN THE FAITH, ACT LIKE MEN, BE STRONG.  
LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE.”

**1 CORINTHIANS 16:13-14**





# WEEK 1 - OVERVIEW (SEPT 1-6)

*This week, we prepare ourselves to go deeper with the book of 1 Corinthians.*

## DAY 1

**READ:** About 1 Corinthians (pg. 7 of this Companion Guide)

### REFLECT:

1. What do you hope to get out of this study?
2. Is there anything you need to do right now and/or over the course of the next 10 weeks to allow God's Spirit to accomplish your answer to Reflection Question #1?
3. Is there anyone with whom you can partner to do this study?

**PRAY:** For you to hear God's voice through 1 Corinthians and for your spiritual growth.

## DAY 2

**READ:** Acts 18:1-18

### REFLECT:

1. What *positive* things did Paul experience while in Corinth? (*Find at least 3*)
2. What *challenging* things did Paul experience while in Corinth? (*Find at least 2*)
3. What is one positive thing God is doing in your life right now?
4. What is one challenging thing you are facing that God might be using for your growth?

**PRAY:** For God to work through you like He did Paul and his companions in Acts 18, and for God to give you perseverance through the challenges of life and joy in the positive moments.



## DAY 3

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

### REFLECT:

1. As we will see in the coming days, the church in Corinth was a spiritual and emotional mess. Yet, Paul calls them “saints” (verse 2). How can Paul give them such a glorious title, even expressing gratitude for them (verse 4) and calling them “guiltless” (verse 8), when they are misbehaving so badly?
2. If you follow Jesus (“call upon the name of the Lord” (verse 2)), then you are a “saint.” How can God give you such a glorious title in light of the sinful things you’ve done, whether in word, thought, or deed?

**PRAY:** Take some time to confess your sin, then thank God for His grace shown through the cross of Christ and His faithfulness toward you. Conclude your prayer by asking God to help you persevere in your faith, sustaining you to the end.

## DAY 4

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

### REFLECT:

1. What mattered most to Paul when he was living in Corinth among the people there?
2. How does a person discover this “wisdom” which matters most?
3. Are there any changes you need to make to let Jesus and His gospel matter most in your life?

**PRAY:** For God to help you think with the mind of Christ.

“FOR I DECIDED TO KNOW NOTHING AMONG YOU  
EXCEPT JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED.”  
1 CORINTHIANS 2:2



# WEEK 2 - CORRECTING DIVISIONS (SEPT 8-13)

*This week, we will look at the extremely important topic of church unity.*

## DAY 1

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 1:10-31

### REFLECT:

1. How were the Corinthians believers dividing themselves?
2. What tribes do Christians divide themselves into?
3. Why was Paul so adamant that these divisions were wrong?
4. What might you need to do (for your part) in blurring some of the modern day tribalism we see in the American church?

**PRAY:** Ask God to continue to give Riverwood unity, and that we would operate with an irenic (open-handed, peace-filled) spirit with brothers and sisters in Christ in other churches.

## DAY 2

**READ:** Ephesians 4:1-32

### REFLECT:

1. Why is unity such an important topic?
2. How can Jesus-followers help maintain church unity?
3. If you follow Jesus, what might you need to do to fix a broken relationship or strengthen a relationship with a fellow Jesus-follower?

**PRAY:** For God to heal any broken or strained relationships you might have with a fellow Jesus-follower.



## DAY 3

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 3:1-15

**REFLECT:**

1. Who or what is to be the foundation of a person's faith?
2. What role should pastors, parents, authors, podcasters, etc. (people who might know more than you about the Bible and following Jesus) play in your spiritual growth?
3. Who or what would God say is the foundation of your faith? If it is anyone or anything other than Jesus, what do you need to do with the Spirit's help, to make your foundation Jesus and his gospel?

**PRAY:** For God to help you build your life solely upon the foundation of Christ and to help others do the same.

## DAY 4

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

**REFLECT:**

1. Our topic this week is church unity. How does 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (which comes from the middle of an explanation about spiritual gifts) contribute to this conversation?
2. No matter which "part" you are within the Riverwood family, you are important. How can you start/continue/increase contributing to the "body" of believers known as Riverwood Church?

**PRAY:** For the unity of Riverwood, and for your part in building and maintaining that unity.



"DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOU ARE GOD'S TEMPLE AND THAT GOD'S SPIRIT DWELLS IN YOU?"

**1 CORINTHIANS 3:16**

# WEEK 3 - CONFRONTING SCANDALS (SEPT 15-20)

*The church in ancient Corinth struggled with several scandals, both sexual and nonsexual in nature. This week, we look at some of the non-sexual scandalous activities that were taking place in the church in ancient Corinth.*

## DAY 1

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 4:1-21

### REFLECT:

1. Paul, Apollos, Cephas (aka Peter), and other prominent Christian leaders of the day were being venerated by the believers in Corinth. But how does Paul describe the role and life of an apostle, pastor, or leader within the church?
2. As a contrast to your answer to question #1, Paul exhorted his readers to “imitate” him (verse 16). Why does he say such a thing?
3. Are you living a life others should imitate? If not, what should you change, and how might you go about letting the Holy Spirit bring that change?

**PRAY:** For God to make you an imitator of Christ so others might imitate you.

## DAY 2

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

### REFLECT:

1. What is the scandal in this passage and why is it a problem?
2. How does this scandal affect the topic of Week 2: church unity?
3. If you have been unjustly wronged by a follower of Jesus, what might you need to do in light of today’s passage?

**PRAY:** For the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom in navigating relationships and the ability to forgive those who have wronged you.



## DAY 3

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

### **REFLECT:**

1. Many of the prostitutes at the cultic temples had short hair or shaved heads. Why was it inadvisable for the believing women in Corinth to follow this fashion trend?
2. If you follow Jesus, what part should culture play in the public expression of your faith?
3. How does God describe through Paul's pen the relationship between men and women, particularly within marriage? Does Paul argue from culture, logic, Scripture, or something else?
4. If you follow Jesus, what cultural hangup might you have that is keeping you from living out your faith in Christ with integrity? In other words, where might you be compromising your faith because culture says, "that's ok"?

**PRAY:** Confess any ways the Holy Spirit brings to mind in which you haven't honored the "head" that God has put over you (particularly Christ Himself), then ask God to help you live obediently to Him and not at the whims of culture.

## DAY 4

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 10:15-22; 11:17-34

### **REFLECT:**

1. How does Paul instruct the Corinthian Jesus-followers to approach the communion table and participate in the partaking of the elements?
2. Riverwood offers the sacrament of communion almost every Sunday at our Worship Gatherings. For many people, when they do something routinely, the specialness of it wanes. What one or two things might you do to protect or recover the beauty of communion this coming Sunday?

**PRAY:** For God to be glorified each time you remember the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus through the sacrament of communion.

## BONUS DAY

**READ:** Galatians 2:11–3:9

### REFLECT:

1. In Acts 10, we learn that Cephas (Peter) was the one through whom God showed that Jesus' death and resurrection was also for Gentiles. Yet in Galatians 2, Paul wrote about a time Peter forgot this and pulled away from his Gentile brothers in the faith. What caused him to emotionally and physically pull away from the Gentiles?

2. Are there any brothers and sisters in Christ you find yourself "pulling away from"? How might God be calling you to reconnect and honor these people?

**PRAY:** For God to give you His eyes so you can see the people around you like He does.







# WEEK 4 - CLARIFYING SEX (SEPT 22-27)

*This week and next, we will hear God speak into the important and sensitive issues of sex, marriage, relationships, and gender.*

## DAY 1

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

### REFLECT:

1. As stated in the introduction to this *Companion Guide*, the culture of Corinth had an extremely open and progressive view of sexual activity. What arguments does Paul use to encourage the Jesus-followers in Corinth to not engage in sexual activity outside of marriage so that the “marriage bed may be undefiled” (Hebrews 13:4)? *(Find at least two arguments.)*
2. What is the “price” that was paid to purchase you (verse 20)? What does this tell you about your worth?
3. What does it look like for you to “flee sexual immorality” (verse 18) in today’s day and age?
4. If you follow Jesus, your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (verse 19). How can you “glorify God in your body” (verse 20), whether concerning sex, food, sleep, exercise, etc.?

**PRAY:** Confess any sexual sins, thank God for His grace to cover those sins, and ask for Him to empower you to flee sexual immorality and glorify Him with your body.

## DAY 2

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

### REFLECT:

1. On Day 1, we saw in 1 Corinthians 6:12 one of the “arguments” the Corinthians used to defend their loose sexual customs: “all things are lawful



for me.” The Jesus-followers combined this phrase with the theological truth of God’s grace to justify their acceptance of some sexual activities among their church family. What was the issue? And why did Paul speak against this issue?

2. In a previous letter (not captured into the canon of Scripture), Paul told the believers in Corinth to “not associate with sexually immoral people” (verse 9). In this letter, he clarified this statement. What is his clarification?

3. How do Christians today sometimes justify sexual sin within the church? Are you, in any way, doing the same?

4. How should we, the Jesus-followers at Riverwood, interact with those who don’t follow Jesus and have different thoughts and approaches on the topic of sexuality?

**PRAY:** For God to make Riverwood (and you) a people of grace, but not to the detriment of God’s truth.

## DAY 3

**READ:** 2 Corinthians 2:1-11 (*That is not a typo! Please read from Second Corinthians.*)

### REFLECT:

1. Most scholars believe this passage is a follow up from Paul about the issue raised in the Day 2 reading. What action did the Corinthian believers appear to have taken in response to 1 Corinthians 5:1-13? And what is Paul now asking them to do?

2. Is there anyone you have shunned or “punished” to whom you should extend forgiveness and reconciliation so that you might “reaffirm your love” for them (verse 8)?

**PRAY:** For God to give you wisdom to live a life full of grace and truth.

## DAY 4

**READ:** Proverbs 5



## **REFLECT:**

1. Is Solomon saying in Proverbs 5 that sex is bad or sinful? Why or why not?
2. The ancient Hebrews often used water as a euphemism for sex. What advice, therefore, is Solomon giving his son(s) in verses 15-23?
3. Sexual allure and temptation can come from more than just a “forbidden woman” (verse 3). What are some of the ways you are tempted sexually to “drink” from other “cisterns”? How might you avoid “the door of her house” (verse 8) so you might obey the instruction in 1 Corinthians 6:20 to “honor God with your body” (mind, eyes, hands, genitals, etc.)?

**PRAY:** For God to empower you to recognize when sexual temptation is coming and to find the way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).

## **BONUS DAY**

**READ:** Proverbs 7

## **REFLECT:**

1. In our current culture, sexual activity is considered fine and normal, as long as it is between “consenting adults.” Yet, Solomon warned his son away from consenting to sex with someone who was not his wife. Why did Solomon give advice which runs counter to natural human desires, to our current culture, and the culture the Corinthians experienced in their day?
2. Much of Proverbs 7 echoes Proverbs 5 (which you read on Day 4). Why do you think Solomon repeated himself? What impact does this have on you?
3. Solomon described the young man as being “simple” (verse 7) and “lacking sense” (verse 8).
  - A) What does it look like in our day to be “simple” when it comes to sex?
  - B) How might *you* be “simple” and “lacking sense”?
  - C) What might the Holy Spirit be calling you to do to mature in the area of sexuality so you might “glorify God with your body?” (1 Corinthians 6:18)

**PRAY:** Ask the Holy Spirit to give you strength, wisdom, and courage to live out a biblical sexual ethic and resist the temptations put forth by culture and sinful desires.



**"YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN, FOR YOU WERE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE.  
SO GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY."**

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:19b-20**



# WEEK 5 - CELEBRATING MARRIAGE AND SINGLENES

*Let's continue our dive into the beautiful issue of sex & marriage, focusing more on the institution of marriage, as well as the beauty of not being married.*

## DAY 1

**READ:** Genesis 2:18-25, Matthew 19:3-9, Hebrews 13:4

### REFLECT:

1. Who created marriage? How should we approach marriage?
2. Not only did the Jewish leaders of the day struggle with Jesus' instruction about the permanency of marriage (Matt. 19:4-7), His own disciples struggled as well (Matt. 19:10). Why do you think Jesus' "no divorce" policy was so hard to accept?
3. Why do you think God's design for marriage is "until death do us part"?  
*(Hint: the gospel itself gives us the answer to this question!)*

**PRAY:** If you are married, pray for your spouse and your marriage as a whole. Whether you are married or not, pray for the marriages of family members and/or close friends.

## DAY 2

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 6:18-7:7 *(You've already read part of this, but you can do it again!)*

### REFLECT:

1. A) Who "owns" a person's body? The person themselves? God? Their spouse?  
B) How does this idea of "ownership" affect the topics of sex and marriage?
2. If you are married, what is God telling you to do with "your" body pertaining to the topic of sex?



3. Are there ways you have not honored your spouse (whether current or future) by using your body sexually in selfish ways? If so, what is God calling for you to do?

**PRAY:** For sexual healing and for husbands and wives to honor one another and God through their marriage.

## **DAY 3**

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 7:8-24

### **REFLECT:**

1. In many pockets of our culture, including some portions of Christianity, single people are viewed as “less than.” Yet, Paul seems to elevate the status of single people. Why?
2. If a married person has a spouse who isn’t a follower of Jesus, what are they to do and why?
3. Have you viewed singleness as a curse (whether you are currently single or married)? If so, how can you change your perspective? And how might you love and support the unmarried people in your life?

**PRAY:** For the singles within the Riverwood family to feel loved by God and fully supported by the broader Riverwood family.

## **DAY 4**

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 7:25-40

### **REFLECT:**

1. What are the advantages of being unmarried? What are the disadvantages?
2. Which does Paul say is better, to be married or remain single? Why?
3. In light of your answer to #2, is remaining single a sin or is getting married sinful? Why or why not?

**PRAY:** For the singles in the Riverwood family to be fully devoted to God (to glorify Him in their bodies, minds, hearts, actions, and words), and for the

married couples within Riverwood to follow the lead of the singles in their devotion to the Lord.

## **BONUS DAY**

**READ:** Ephesians 5:21-33 and/or 1 Peter 3:1-12

### **REFLECT:**

1. According to either/both of these passage, who “submits” to whom, and what does this “submission” look like?
2. What does a wife’s approach to her husband look like?
3. What does a husband’s approach to his wife look like?
4. If you are married, is there anything you need to change in your role toward your spouse?

**PRAY:** For the married couples of the Riverwood family to glorify God through their marriage.







# WEEK 6 - RESTING IN CHRIST (OCT 6-11)

*This week, we are taking a break from our study of 1 Corinthians to prepare for our Restoration Service this coming Sunday, October 12.*

## DAY 1

**READ:** Matthew 11:27–12:13

### REFLECT:

1. What was the purpose of the Sabbath?
2. What does it mean for Jesus to be “the Lord of the Sabbath”?
3. Where do you often run or retreat to find rest?

**PRAY:** For you to find your true rest in Christ.

## DAY 2

**READ:** Psalm 95

### REFLECT:

1. Why should we sing, worship, and kneel before God?
2. Why did God not allow the ancient Israelites who wandered the wilderness to “enter His rest” (verse 11)?
3. Have you “hardened your heart” (verse 8) against the Lord in any way? If so, what might you need to do to allow the Holy Spirit to soften it once again?

**PRAY:** For God to give you a soft heart that is able to sing, worship, and kneel before your God.

## DAY 3

**READ:** Hebrews 3:7-19



**REFLECT:**

1. The author of Hebrews gives a bit of an expository sermon from Psalm 95 here in chapter 3. What does he say was the reason why God did not allow the Israelites to “enter His rest”?
2. What warning does God give us through these verses? What encouragement/exhortation does He also give?

**PRAY:** For God to continue to soften your heart to His leading.

**DAY 4**

**READ:** Hebrews 4:1-16

**REFLECT:**

1. Hebrews 4 continues the expository sermon from Psalm 95. This time in verse 4, the author quotes from Genesis 2:2 when God rested on the seventh day of creation. According to Hebrews 4:9-10, who has entered that rest with God?
2. With this in mind, let’s revisit Day 1... why does the cross of Christ and His empty tomb make Him “Lord of the Sabbath”?
3. What might it look like for you to truly find rest in Christ and not seek for it first and foremost in entertainment, food, drink, games, sports, etc.?

**PRAY:** For you to continue to grow in the knowledge of Jesus being your “Sabbath rest.”

**BONUS 1**

**READ:** Psalm 23

**REFLECT:**

1. What does it look like for Jesus to be your shepherd?
2. What does it look like for you to spiritually “lie down in green pastures” and enjoy a meal in the “presence of my enemies”?

**PRAY:** For the Holy Spirit to help you follow & rest in Jesus the Good Shepherd (John 10:11).

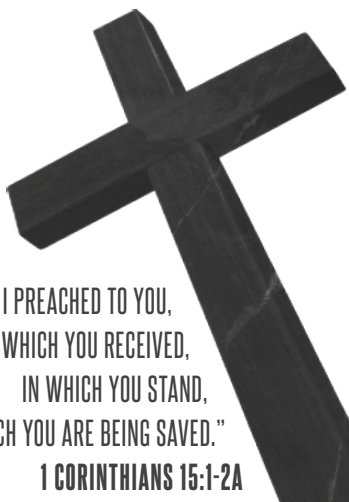
## **BONUS 2**

**RE-READ:** Psalm 95

**REFLECT:**

This is the passage we will be using on Sunday during the Restoration Service. Take some time to simply meditate upon it. Which phrase jumps out at you? Which phrases are most comforting?

**PRAY:** For God's Holy Spirit to restore your soul today, Sunday, and each day.



"NOW I WOULD REMIND YOU, BROTHERS, OF THE GOSPEL I PREACHED TO YOU,  
WHICH YOU RECEIVED,  
IN WHICH YOU STAND,  
AND BY WHICH YOU ARE BEING SAVED."

**1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-2A**



# WEEK 7 - CONSCIOUSLY CARE (OCT 13-18)

*This week, as we return to our study of 1 Corinthians, we are going to look at how to truly care and honor others, especially those who are fellow believers in the gospel.*

## DAY 1

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

### REFLECT:

1. Paul basically says that meat is just meat whether it was from an animal sacrificed to a false god or not. Yet, he encourages the Jesus-followers to be willing to give up their right to eat meat that came from a cultic temple. Why?
2. What might be some modern day equivalents to “meat sacrificed to idols” - things not forbidden by Scripture or law, and which do not harm the body, yet still cause some Christians to “stumble”?
3. What might be a “meat” God is asking you to give up for the sake of someone else, even though you have a right to enjoy it?

**PRAY:** For wisdom to recognize “meat” and know when to abstain and when to enjoy.

## DAY 2

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

### REFLECT:

1. Which verse(s) seems to be the thrust of Paul’s argument for this week’s topic?
2. How might God’s Spirit be calling you to obey verse 24?
3. Could you write what Paul wrote in 11:1? If not, what might the Holy Spirit want to change in you so that you could write such words?



**PRAY:** For God to give you strength, so that “whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

## DAY 3

**READ:** Romans 13:8–14:12

### REFLECT:

1. What is the purpose and fulfillment of the law of God?
2. How does 14:7-8 help you to be willing to surrender your rights in order to care for the conscience of fellow Jesus-followers?

**PRAY:** If you follow Jesus, pray for God to help you love your fellow Jesus-followers purely. If you aren’t a Jesus-follower yet, pray for God to help you understand the gospel and put your faith in Christ.

## DAY 4

**READ:** Romans 14:13–15:7

### REFLECT:

1. Who or what does Paul say is to be our example or motivation to consciously care for others?
2. In light of your answer to question 1, how does the gospel help us put others first?
3. Why do you think Paul gives so much space in the books of 1 Corinthians and Romans to this topic of “conscious care”?

**PRAY:** For God to give you opportunities today and/or this week to show the love of Christ to someone who is “weak” (Romans 15:1).

## BONUS DAY

**READ:** Philippians 2:1-11



**REFLECT:**

1. The thrust of this bonus passage is humility. Yet Paul uses Jesus, the King of Kings, as his example of what humility looks like. Why?
2. In what areas or ways is the Holy Spirit calling you to be humble in the likeness of Jesus?

**PRAY:** For God to not only empower you to live a humble life that is able to consider the needs of others before your own, but to give you opened eyes to see the needs of others.







# WEEK 8 - CHALLENGING COMMITMENT (OCT 20-25)

*This week, we will hear Paul challenge the Corinthian believers (and modern day Jesus-followers) to truly give everything to the Lord for the sake of the gospel.*

## DAY 1

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 9:1-26

### REFLECT:

1. What things did Paul (and the apostles) have a right to? *(Find at least three)*
2. Why did Paul and Barnabus not make use of their rights?
3. What do you have a right to that God might be asking you to give up (at least for a time)? Social media usage? Certain foods or drinks? Certain forms of entertainment?

**PRAY:** For God to give you the courage to sacrifice whatever you need to for the glory of God and the good of others.

## DAY 2

**READ:** Exodus 13:17–14:22; 17:1-6

### REFLECT:

1. Twice in today's reading (14:11-12, 17:3), the Israelites complained that Moses led them out of Egypt. Yet, when they did live in Egypt, they were slaves! Why do you think the people wished to be back in Egypt rather than be free in the wilderness?
2. Christ came to free us from sin, yet Christians will too often return to their spiritual slavery. Why do you think this is?
3. In Exodus 13, the Israelites had to trust the leading of God through the pillar of fire and cloud. In Exodus 14, they had to trust God as they crossed through the Red Sea. In Exodus 16 (which we did not read), they had to trust God to



provide food, and in Exodus 17, they had to trust God to provide water. What do you need to trust God to provide? Wisdom? Finances? Strength?

**PRAY:** Open your Bible to Matthew 6:9-13 and allow the Lord's Prayer to guide your prayer.

## DAY 3

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 10:1-14

### REFLECT:

1. Yesterday, we read a couple of stories from the book of Exodus. What does Paul say is the purpose of these stories?
2. What should a Jesus-follower do when tempted?
3. What is one thing you feel the Spirit is calling you to do in light of today's reading?

**PRAY:** Confess any ways you have "put Christ to the test" (verse 9), then thank God for His faithfulness (verse 13), asking Him to help you escape and endure temptation.

## DAY 4

**READ:** 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

### REFLECT:

1. What is the will of God for your life? And how is this goal of God's achieved?
2. Paul lists some things Jesus-followers should not do and some things they should do. Find at least two of each.
3. What might it look like for you to "walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one" (verse 12)?

**PRAY:** For you to live out the gospel more and more (verse 1) so God might sanctify you (verse 3).



## BONUS DAY

**READ:** Luke 9:18-26

### REFLECT:

1. What did Jesus have to do as the “Christ of God”?
2. What do you need to do as a follower of Jesus?

**PRAY:** For the Holy Spirit to empower you to daily deny yourself, take up your “cross,” and follow Jesus.



“WHETHER YOU EAT OR DRINK  
OR WHATEVER YOU DO,  
DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD.”  
**1 CORINTHIANS 10:32-33**



# WEEK 9 - CARING THROUGH THE GIFTS (OCT 27-NOV 2)

*This week, we get to learn about spiritual gifts and why God doles these gifts out to all who follow Jesus.*

## DAY 1

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

### REFLECT:

1. In verses 4-11, Paul mentions several times there are a variety of gifts, and even lists some of these gifts. Yet he contrasts this concept of “variety” with a critically important truth. What is that truth?
2. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts as a whole?

**PRAY:** If you follow Jesus, then you have been given at least one spiritual gift. If you are unsure what your gifts might be, pray for God to make it known. If you know (or have an inkling), pray for opportunities to use your gift(s).

## DAY 2

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 12:28-13:13

### REFLECT:

1. Because Paul gives so much time to the topic of spiritual gifts in this letter, it was clearly an important topic. Yet he makes it clear there was at least one thing *more* important. What is it and why is it more important?
2. Chapter 13 is a famous passage, commonly heard at weddings. Take a moment to reread verses 4-8. What is one area of your life in which you need to grow in love? (i.e. Patience? Not envy? Not insisting your own way? etc.)

**PRAY:** For God to grow you so much in love you might truly love like Jesus.



## DAY 3

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 14:1-25

### REFLECT:

1. “Speaking in tongues,” simply means to speak in another language. In Acts 2, we see the Holy Spirit empower the early disciples to communicate about God’s grace in other languages they hadn’t known previously. Yet, as miraculous as this is, Paul indicates another gift was more important. What is that gift and *why* is it more important?
2. According to these twenty-five verses, how important is the gift of interpretation? Why do you say that?
3. The topic of tongues has been confusing to many throughout history. It would seem this gift/topic was also creating confusion and chaos in Corinth. How does Paul seem to be helping them navigate the issue? What can you take away from Paul’s teaching to help you navigate this confusing issue?

**PRAY:** For God to give you (as well as His Church) clarity about spiritual gifts, particularly the gift of tongues.

## DAY 4

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 14:26-40

### REFLECT:

1. As Paul talks about the use of spiritual gifts within a corporate worship setting, what things should be prioritized? (*Find at least two or three.*)
2. This discussion on spiritual gifts began in chapter 12, yet Paul is still talking about it here at the end of chapter 14. Yet, as we saw on Day 2, he interrupted the discussion to talk about love in chapter 13. How does the topic of love help us navigate these closing words about spiritual gifts?

**PRAY:** For God to help Riverwood maintain orderly worship that is Christ-exalting so all who come might find Jesus and/or follow Him more closely.



## BONUS DAY

**READ:** Romans 12:3-21

### REFLECT:

1. As Paul talks about the topic of spiritual gifts with the church in Rome in verses 3-8, he starts with an encouragement for them to exhibit humility. Why do you think he begins this way?
2. As you read verses 9-21, what one or two things jump out to you as something the Holy Spirit is calling you to do?

**PRAY:** For the Holy Spirit to help you use your spiritual gift(s) in such a way that you fulfill the call to action of verses 9-21.







# WEEK 10 - CENTERING ON THE RESURRECTION (NOV 3-8)

*This week, we get to see the critical importance of the resurrection of Jesus to the Christian faith and your individual faith.*

## DAY 1

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

### REFLECT:

1. What are the important parts of the gospel Paul makes sure to remind the believers in Corinth? *(While you will be tempted to focus on verses 3-4, be sure to look at all eleven verses as you answer.)*
2. As you consider this passage, what aspect(s) of the gospel do you tend to overemphasize and what aspect(s) do you tend to underemphasize?
3. How are you currently “being saved” by the gospel (verse 2)? What are you actively doing or need to do to see the gospel work in you and through you?

**PRAY:** For God to help you continue to treasure the gospel “which you have received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved.” (verses 1-2)

## DAY 2

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 15:12-34

### REFLECT:

1. How is the Christian faith affected if there is no possibility of resurrection?
2. Why is the resurrection so critical to our faith?
3. How does the resurrection of Christ give you hope?

**PRAY:** Thank God that the sacrifice of Christ shows God’s love, and the resurrection of Christ shows God’s power.

## DAY 3

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 15:35-49



**REFLECT:**

1. What will happen to the body of a Christ-follower upon resurrection at the end of all things?
2. How do these truths about resurrection encourage you?

**PRAY:** For the Holy Spirit to daily shape you into the likeness of Christ.

**DAY 4**

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

**REFLECT:**

1. Why does Paul quote from Isaiah 25:8 in verses 54-55 toward the end of his discussion about resurrection?
2. In light of resurrection for all who believe in Jesus, what encouragement does Paul give his readers at the end of chapter 15?

**PRAY:** For God to empower you to be “steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (verse 58).

**BONUS DAY**

**READ:** Acts 2:22-39

**REFLECT:**

1. Today’s reading comes from Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on the believers of the resurrection of Jesus. Why do you think Peter centered so much of his speech on the resurrection of Christ?
2. In verses 34-35, Peter quotes Psalm 110:1, the very same verse Jesus used in Luke 20:41-44 to show His complete understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures. Why did Peter quote Psalm 110:1?
3. If a person is convicted of their sin and realizes the truth of Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, what should they do? Have you done this?

**PRAY:** For God to overflow your heart with awe for the resurrection of Christ.

# LESSON 11 - CLOSING WELL (NOV 10-15)

*In our final week, we not only see Paul bring his letter to a conclusion, but hear some final instructions on living a life that will “close well.”*

## DAY 1

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 9:1-15

### REFLECT:

1. Paul introduced the topic of financial giving to his Corinthian readers in 16:1-4, then expanded the topic in chapter 9 of his next letter. What are some of the instructions he gave that apply to Jesus-followers today? (*List at least four.*)
2. As you look at the list you created for Question 1, which one or two of those do you need/want to grow in?

**PRAY:** For the Heavenly Father to make us generous just as He is generous.

## DAY 2

**READ:** Acts 18:24-28, 1 Corinthians 16:5-12

### REFLECT:

- 1a. Why did Paul not want to just “pass through” Corinth?
- 1b. What can you do to not just “pass through” someone else’s life?
- 2a. How did Paul instruct the Corinthians to treat Timothy?
- 2b. Who might you be able to put “at ease” and treat them “in peace” today or this week?
- 3a. What are some admirable characteristics of Apollos?
- 3b. What admirable characteristics would you like someone else to describe of you? What can you do to let the Holy Spirit develop those characteristics?

**PRAY:** For God to empower you to love like Jesus loved and live like Jesus lived.



## DAY 3

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 16:13-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24

### REFLECT:

1. Some English translations of 1 Corinthians 16:13 have the phrase “act like men” which was a cliché of the day which meant “be courageous.” Why do you think Paul is calling the Corinthian believers to display courage?
2. After calling the Corinthian believers to display strength, courage, and faith, Paul then tells them for these attributes to be done in love. How might love transform the way you live out courage and strength in your daily relationships?
3. Much of 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24 has similar overtones as 1 Corinthians 16:13-14. Of these short-yet-powerful instructions, which stand out to you as most needed in your current season of life?

**PRAY:** For the God of Peace to “sanctify you completely,” so that you “whole spirit and soul and body may be kept blameless” until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

## DAY 4

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 16:15-24

### REFLECT:

1. Paul commended the household of Stephanas for “devoting themselves” to serving the Lord’s people (verse 15). What does it look like for you to “devote yourself” to serving others in your current context?
2. In verses 16–18, Paul highlighted the encouragement and refreshment he received from various Jesus-followers.
  - a. Who has “refreshed your spirit” in your spiritual walk with Christ, and how can you express your gratitude to them today or this week?
  - b. How can you “refresh” someone else’s spirit today or this week?

**PRAY:** For God to empower you to serve the Lord’s people and refresh their spirits.

# KEEP IT GOING...

Thank you for joining us in this study of 1 Corinthians! We hope it has been helpful, challenging, and nourishing to your soul. Now that we are done, we want to encourage you to keep learning...

## ...WITH THE BIBLE

Even though we are finished with 1 Corinthians, we encourage you to keep learning and growing. If you weren't using a Bible Reading plan before we began this study back in September, consider using one of the plans found on our website at <https://weareriverwood.org/resources/freebies/>. You can also find reading plans on the YouVersion Bible app. Before you go search for a plan, you might consider reading 1 Corinthians again or going on to 2 Corinthians.

## ...WITH A GROWTH GROUP

If you are not part of a Growth Group, this would be a great time to consider joining one. Email [jake@weareriverwood.org](mailto:jake@weareriverwood.org) to find a group with whom you can continue to grow spiritually.

## ...WITH OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH RESOURCES

Pick up a *Going Deeper* Spiritual Growth Resource sheet outside the Riverwood office (based on your current spiritual maturity) or download one online at <https://weareriverwood.org/resources/spiritual-growth/>

"THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS BE WITH YOU. .  
MY LOVE BE WITH YOU ALL IN CHRIST JESUS. AMEN."

1 CORINTHIANS 16:23-24

